



Welcome

ORDER OF WORSHIP FOR
Sunday,
January 12, 2025
10:00 AM

First Sunday
after Epiphany



New to St. Peter's? We are so glad you are here!

Please see a

Welcome Card

**in the pew rack
for information about:**

Worship Times and Options

Open & Affirming

Childcare

Accessibility

WiFi

Ways to Give

Holy Communion

Contact Info

And much more!

*Printed copies of today's scriptures are available
in the narthex if you like to read along.*

St. Peter's United Church of Christ in Skokie
Order of Worship for
Sunday, January 12, 2025 at 10:00am
First Sunday after Epiphany

Welcome to worship. The music before the service is intended as a time of silent prayer and preparation.

PRELUDE Selected

THE RINGING OF THE BELLS

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Peggy Reins

Will those who are able please stand up

CALL TO WORSHIP

P: Today, we gather as a community of faith, united in spirit and purpose.

C: **We come together, open to the transforming power of the Holy Spirit.**

P: Just as the apostles laid hands on the believers, we too seek to embody that same spirit of inclusion and love.

C: **We welcome all, embracing each person as a beloved child of God, regardless of their journey.**

P: Let us worship with hearts wide open, ready to receive God's wisdom and guidance.

C: **May we be filled with the Spirit, empowered to live out our faith in action and service.**

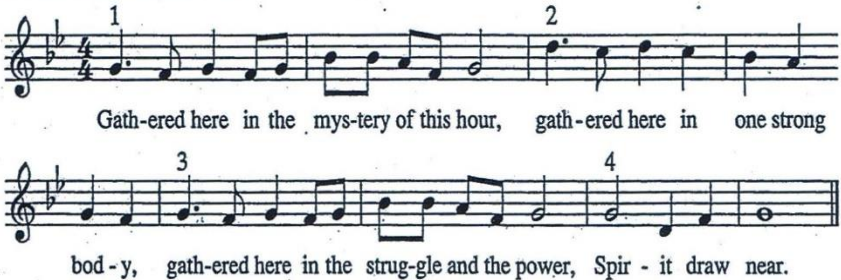
P: Come, let us worship together in love and joy!

C: **Amen.**

OPENING RESPONSE

“Gathered Here in the Mystery of this Hour”

Text and music: Phil Porter, 1990



Gath-ered here in the mys-tery of this hour, gath-ered here in one strong
bod-y, gath-ered here in the strug-gle and the power, Spir - it draw near.

This chant may be sung as a round.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

A: Holy and Loving God, we come before You today acknowledging our imperfections and shortcomings. We confess that we have often closed our hearts to those who are different from us. We have been quick to judge and slow to act in love and compassion. We have neglected to share the gifts of Your Spirit with others, allowing fear and doubt to hold us back. Forgive us, O God, for the ways we have fallen short of Your calling. Help us to embrace the diversity of Your creation and to serve all with kindness and grace.

Pause for silent reflection

P: In Your great mercy, Lord, hear our prayers and transform our hearts. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

P: Friends, hear the good news: God’s love knows no bounds, and through Christ, we are forgiven. We are

released from our burdens and called to begin anew.
Empowered by the Holy Spirit, let us go forth in peace,
ready to love and serve as we have been loved and
served.

C: Thanks be to God! Amen.

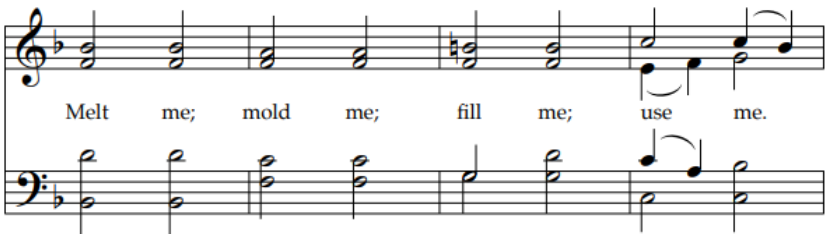
HYMN "Spirit of the Living God, Fall Afresh On Me"



Spir - it of the liv - ing God, fall a - fresh on me.



Spir - it of the liv - ing God, fall a - fresh on me.



Melt me; mold me; fill me; use me.



Spir - it of the liv - ing God, fall a - fresh on me.

The congregation may be seated

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION AND SCRIPTURE READING

Rich Schneider

Scripture Lesson

Acts 8:17

MUSICAL MEDITATION

PASTORAL AND SILENT PRAYERS

THE LORD'S PRAYER

A: Our Father, who art in heaven,

Hallowed be Thy name.

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done,

on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread,

And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation,

but deliver us from evil;

For Thine is the kingdom, and the power,

and the glory forever. Amen

CALL TO OFFERING

OFFERTORY

If you donate electronically, feel free to place an "Electronic Giving" card into the plate as it comes around so you can enjoy participating in the physical act of giving.

Will those who are able please stand up

OFFERTORY RESPONSE "We Are an Offering" SSB #11

The musical score is written in 4/4 time. The vocal line is on a single staff, and the piano accompaniment is on a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The lyrics are: "We lift our voices, we lift our hands, we lift our lives up to You, we are an offering; Lord, use our voices, Lord, use our hands, Lord, use our lives, they are Yours, we are an offering. All that we have, all that we are, all that we hope to be we give to You, we give to You. We lift our voices, we lift our hands, we lift our lives up to You, we are an offering, we are an offering."

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

A: Gracious God, we come before You with grateful hearts, offering our gifts and resources as a sign of our love and commitment to Your work in the world. We dedicate these offerings to the mission of Your church, seeking to spread Your love and grace to all. Just as the apostles prayed and laid hands on those who received the Spirit, may our gifts empower our community to grow in faith and action. May our offerings be used to bring hope to the hopeless, strength to the weary, and joy to those in need. Bless these gifts, O God, and those who give them, that together we may join in Your transformative work. Amen.

The congregation may be seated

SERMON “The Right Touch”

Will those who are able please stand up


HYMN "Lord, Dismiss Us With Thy Blessing"



1 Lord, dis - miss us with thy bless - ing; fill our hearts with
 2 Thanks we give and a - dor - a - tion for thy Gos - pel's
 3 so that when thy love shall call us, Sa - vior, from the



joy and peace; let us each, thy love pos - sess - ing,
 joy - ful sound; may the fruits of thy sal - va - tion
 world a - way, fear of death shall not ap - pall us,



tri - umph in re - deem - ing grace: O re - fresh us,
 in our hearts and lives a - bound: ev - er faith - ful,
 glad thy sum - mons to o - bey. May we ev - er,



O re - fresh us trav - eling through this wil - der - ness.
 ev - er faith - ful to thy truth may we be found;
 may we ev - er reign with thee in end - less day.

CHARGE

P: As we go forth from this place, may we carry the light of Christ into the world.

C: **We are called to share the love of God with all, inviting every person into the embrace of community.**

P: Remember that as we receive the Spirit, we are empowered to act in love and service.

C: **We will be agents of change, justice, and compassion in our lives.**

P: And now, may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C: **Amen.**

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

The music after the service is intended as a time of reflection. Pastor will be pleased to greet you at the Sanctuary doors as soon as the postlude has concluded, and our livestream has stopped.

FOR WORSHIP TODAY







MINISTER	Minister Renita Ward
MUSIC DIRECTOR	Ben Westphal
DEACON	Beth Sterba
LIVESTREAM RECORDING	Jenn Schneider
NURSERY ATTENDANT	Kathy Zipperer

News in the Pews

Welcome to worship at St. Peter's United Church of Christ. May you experience the love of Jesus in the midst of this congregation.

Join us for Coffee Hour downstairs immediately following our worship service. Thank you to Rita McMahon and Karen Christianson for volunteering to serve.

Welcome back to Minister Renita Ward - Minister and Attorney Renita Ward describes herself as “passionate for Jesus Christ” which “fuels her ministry and professional efforts of living out Christ’s model as an advocate, teacher, mediator, and preacher.” She practices law in Illinois and is a Member in Discernment within the Chicago Metropolitan Association of the UCC.

Softgoods Clothing Drive is on! Clean out those closets & storage spaces, we’re looking for soft goods. Items such as  clothing,  bedding, linens, towels,  shoes,  hats, belts,  purses,  stuffed toys- we’ll take them all as Savers pays by the pound. Start the new year off right and help us raise funds. Thanks so much for your consideration!

Church Council meets next Sunday after worship.

St. Peter's Annual Meeting is on January 26th. If you are responsible for submitting a report, please turn your report into the office no later than *Friday, January 10th, 2025.*

Update on our Pastoral Search - St. Peter's journey to find an interim minister continues! We are prayerfully seeking a pastor with the skills and experience to guide our congregation through a time of transition and who will help prepare the way for a settled pastor. Our Local Church Profile for an Interim Search has generated interest from candidates and that's good news! The Church Council is now engaged in a process of search, call, and holy discernment. You may feel free to direct your questions about the search process and its status to church president Peggy Reins. Your continued support and prayers are appreciated as we journey forward together.

Sign up for ☕ Coffee Hour! We hope to have regular coffee hours on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of the month but need folks to sign-up to host. Hosting is just bringing some coffee cake, etc. to share, making coffee and light clean-up. We are also working on new ways to sign-up (including online) soon; contact the office in the meantime if you'd be willing to host or co-host and we'll find you someone to assist if needed.

The Livestream Team Needs Your Help! The livestream setup is very easy to run, and scheduling is very flexible but we are really in need. Please contact Jen S. directly if you can join— we hear all the time that people ARE watching our livestream, and we want to be sure it's available every Sunday for those folks.

Please join us next Sunday as we welcome back Reverend Ally Vertigan to the pulpit!

Our People

Please keep St. Peter's extended family in your thoughts and prayers. Other folks that need your prayers include:

- Maria Altmayer's cousin Dianne, who lives in Pacific Palisades, California and had to evacuate yesterday due to the wildfires.
- Judy Paige will be starting knee therapy for the third time.
- Parents of Anna Riley, prayers for healing and strength.
- Ricky Riley's heart surgery has been scheduled for February 7th, 2025.
- Ann Herren's two daughters; Betsy Herren is doing well having finished her radiation treatment. Jennifer had her surgery and is recovering nicely.
- Sharon Johnson's daughter Donna is doing very well after having surgery but continues her battle with Lymphoma, which can be controlled but not cured.
- 15-year-old family friend of Denise Hopp is suffering from self-harm.
- Cancer has returned for Susan Garcia's Aunt Janice, whom we've prayed for previously.
- Jane Abramchik continues to recover at home aided by a team of home caregivers and her husband Paul.
- Paul Brzozowski's recent MRI was encouraging but his treatment for brain cancer is continuing.
- Annie has asked for continuing prayers for the many people struggling with cancer.
- Those affected by the devastation of Hurricane Helene and Milton and other disaster victims.

Others in our church family to keep close in our hearts include Larry Baumhardt, Ursula Dworak, Lois Jarmuth and Bob Seitman.

If you are aware of others to include in our shared prayers, please let a church officer, an Elder, or the office know!

This week we wish a Happy Birthday to Beth Brzozowski, David Iannotti, Andre Gloeckner, Harrison Kuras and Karen Christianson. **Happy Anniversary to** Pat and Roy Erdman!

According to the schedule and barring any switches, next Sunday's Lector will be Barb Todd, and our Nursery Attendant will be Annie Noorts.

CHURCH LEADERSHIP

PRESIDENT	Peggy Reins
VICE-PRESIDENT	
TREASURER	Chad McCoy
SECRETARY	Annie Noorts
FINANCIAL SECRETARY	Maria Altmayer

Regular Reminders!

Let us know you were here! Please sign the attendance sheet in the black pew pads and when you think your pew is ready, please pass the pad towards the center aisle of the church.

We are always grateful for all offerings to the church. So many thanks to everyone who's been keeping us going with your donations! See inside the bulletin's front cover for details on how to donate.

Our mini-food pantry is a daily mission this church does for the community of Skokie. If you are able, please bring food to help us keep it going. Food can be left on the shelves by the office doors, or in the narthex. Thank you so much!



UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST

MISSION MOMENTS

Affirmed by Love (1/12/2025)

Baptism of the Lord

First Sunday after Epiphany

GREEN

Luke 3:15-17, 21-22

The teen waded into the cold lake. With words of being joined with Christ and the community of believers through the waters of baptism, under she went — emerging seconds later with the most radiant smile anyone had ever seen.

Her father captured that smile, memorializing the day with a photo in a frame that was inscribed with the words God spoke at Jesus' baptism, "This is my beloved."

Now, in a shoebox apartment with a toddler getting into mischief and overdue bills piling up on the kitchen counter, the girl with the once radiant smile, wondered where it all went wrong.

Tired and defeated, she sat on the couch, staring at the wall of pictures before her. It was then she spotted her younger self staring back at her with a smile that time had forgotten.

She shifted her gaze to the words on the frame. Only this time what she heard in her heart was a whisper, "You are **STILL** my beloved." Just then she did something strange. She smiled — radiantly — remembering who was still holding her.

Today is the Baptism of Our Lord Sunday. It is a day that follows the celebration of Epiphany, underscoring the season of Christ appearing to us, revealing the love he has for us and the hope that is found when we clasp our hand in his.

Here, in Luke's gospel, Jesus is recognized as God's beloved, emerging from his baptism in the Jordan River to God's voice thundering praises and the Spirit descending like a dove upon him. It is a new beginning for Jesus. The start of his earthly ministry.

Baptism is an invitation to new life. But as we know, life's newness — its bright prospects, endless possibilities and hopeful promises — can fade with time.

That is why on this day we remember not only Jesus' baptism, but our own. For the very act of remembering that we have been claimed as God's beloveds has the power to revive us once again.

It is said that on his most difficult days and times of great trials, 16th century German Reformer, Martin Luther, would repeat these words: "I am baptized." It was Luther's way of reminding himself that no matter how off course life got, he was still held by a loving God who was always making all things new.

We all need that baptismal reminder.

So today, fill up a sink or a bowl with water. Dip, submerge, splash your hands in it. Then close your eyes and hear God whisper to you, "You are my child, the beloved, with you I am well pleased." And as you do, may you find a radiant smile sweeping across your face.

All-knowing and All-Loving God, may the cleansing waters of baptism wash over our lives, reviving hope for our tomorrows. May we hear Your voice this day reminding us that we are Your beloveds. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Scriptures for Sunday, January 12, 2025

Please join me in spirit of prayer as we offer up our Prayer of Illumination.

Holy Spirit of Wisdom, open our hearts and minds to your truth. Help us to see with compassion, to listen with humility, and to grow in love and understanding. May these sacred words challenge and inspire us, leading us ever closer to mercy, justice, and peace. Amen.

Our scripture reading this morning is Acts 8:17.

Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

This ends our scripture readings the for this morning's service. May God grant us a wise and generous understanding of this God's holy word.

Our worship continues with a musical mediation.